

(323) 881-2401

September 6, 2002

TO: EACH SUPERVISOR

FROM: P. MICHAEL FREEMAN

MOTION REGARDING WINDOW STICKERS FOR PET OWNERS

This memorandum is in response to the motion made by Supervisor Knabe and approved by your Board on July 23, 2002, directing the Fire Chief, the Director of Animal Care and Control, and County Counsel to look into a program which would allow animal owners to obtain window stickers which informs emergency personnel of a pet or pets inside the home. The motion referred to a similar program in the City of Hermosa Beach.

Through consultation with the Director of Animal Care and Control and local pet store chains, we have determined that such a program is feasible. Window stickers are available for purchase for a nominal fee at various pet stores throughout the County. These stickers, when placed on windows at residences or businesses, do help to inform emergency personnel that one or more pets may be inside.

County Counsel has recommended that we do not direct citizens to a specific pet store or chain. They also have cautioned against making any statement to the effect that displaying a window sticker will guarantee their pet can be saved in the case of an emergency. We should not, in any manner, imply that displaying the sticker imposes any liability on the County in the event that a pet is not saved during an emergency.

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The Department of Animal Care and Control offered a similar program in 1999. Two obstacles encountered in that program were a reluctance on the part of some citizens to list all of their pets due to licensing fee issues, and the failure to update the list when pets were added or were no longer in the home. Ensuring that citizens are well-informed about the program may help to alleviate some of these issues.

This program could be initiated by making announcements through the press and by publishing information regarding the stickers on the two department websites. Informational fliers could also be distributed at community events attended by either department.

During our inquiry into this matter, we did check with the City of Hermosa Beach regarding their program. We were informed that the information reported in the local newspaper was in error – Hermosa Beach does not have any program in which they supply window stickers to pet owners.

While a program in which we publicize the benefits and availability of window stickers for pet owners is feasible, implementation and coordination requirements seem to outweigh any benefits to pets and their owners. Furthermore, since firefighting personnel routinely search structures where there is a fire, whether pet stickers are present or not, our recommendation is that implementing such a program would have limited benefit.

If you have questions or would like us to take further action, please contact me at (323) 881-2401 or your staff may contact Battalion Chief David Stone at (323) 881-2472.

PMF:pv

c: David Janssen
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